

Public Hearing Friday, February 22, 2013

Melinda Montovani, Social Worker and Brain Injury Specialist at Brain Injury Alliance of CT

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**Testimony in support of your commitment to funding \$150,000 for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut within the Community Services line.**

Dear Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melinda Montovani and I have the privilege of working for the Brain Injury Alliance of CT (BIAC), where we provide services to the entire state of Connecticut. I reside in the town of West Hartford and work in Windsor.

**BIAC has been contracted by the state of Connecticut for almost 30 years to provide services the State cannot provide.** If funding for BIAC is jeopardized, this will transfer BIAC's responsibilities back onto the Social Workers at the State of CT Department of Social Services.

The State of CT operates the [www.transparency.CT.gov](http://www.transparency.CT.gov) website which lists salaries of state employees. A quick scan shows Social Workers at Department of Social Services for the fiscal year July 2011-June 2012, were making as much as \$70-80,000 a year. Compare that with the salaries of a small non-profit where salaries range at HALF that amount. By utilizing the services at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT the state is cutting its expenditures in half. And yet, every year we are faced with being eliminated from the budget.

Here is a list of what we are contracted to do for the State of CT with the **small operating grant of \$126, 000.**

- Provide information , resources and education on problems with and prevention strategies related to TBI throughout CT
- Provide clients, client families and professionals with Support services and resources including information on funding sources , vocational rehabilitation programs, rehabilitation services, family counseling, TBI support groups, cognitive retraining and recreational services

- Collaborate with the Department of Veteran Affairs, Department of Correction, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Children and Families, and other local and state entities
- Provide educational programs, meetings and conferences designed to educate the public, client families, service providers and other professionals on support services available for clients and the prevention of TBI.
- Conduct, train, support client volunteers as presenters at educational programs.
- Provide Community education programs so students in elementary through high school to increase awareness of the consequences and prevention strategies for TBI
- Provide Educational meetings for hospitals and/or rehab discharge planning staff to provide services and resources on support programs available for clients
- Conduct at least 50 programs and meetings for community and health professionals **(BIAC provided education and training for more than 8500 people in 2012)**
- Offer Conferences, lecture series, and /or health fairs for clients
- Attend Corporate health fairs, exhibits and presentation
- Maintain a minimum of 17 support groups throughout CT. (We currently have 27).
- Facilitate a Provider's council meetings to promote networking and information exchange between providers.
- Support existing legislative initiatives, and create and introduce new legislation, benefiting clients.

No one else in the state does this. We employ brain injury specialists and we do not duplicate any services.

I understand the State wants to support cost effective solutions. **The solution to cost savings is to commit to funding the amount of \$150,000 to the Brain Injury Alliance of CT within the Community Services line.**

I thank you all for your time and commitment and the opportunity to share my views.

Sincerely,

Melinda Montovani, MSW, CBIS